



ANALYZING JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHANS (JSSs) FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Education is focal point for the entire geo-political landscape of our country. It has always been a central agenda for the policymakers in India. Mahatma Gandhi said that, "Education should be so revolutionized as to answer the wants of the poorest villager". Therefore the structure of Indian education system has to have the core objective of providing employment to the learners so that the acquired knowledge can be utilized for the betterment of the society. Educational policymakers have emphasized on the provision of theoretical knowledge along with practical training. In this regard, the establishment and functioning of Jan Shikshan Sansthan is commendable. These centers focus on empowering people whether illiterates, semi-literates or neo-literates to improve their livelihoods through skill enhancement. The objective of the current study is to illuminate the need of Jan Shikshan Sansthan with the complete focus on its functioning and analyzing the benefits of these centers for the target population and, in turn, for the society.

KEYWORDS: Adult Education, Employment, Skill, Literates, Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION:

Undoubtedly, education is an essential component in the success of one's life. It not only helps the person to know more but also provides necessary support to mitigate many challenges of his/her life. Policy makers of India always had given their complete attention and consolidated their energies towards the objective of full literacy in all aspects since the time of planning. Several programs and initiatives came in to achieve this goal namely, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, idea of Free Education, Special provisions to the education of girl child, Para-teacher schemes etc. With many amendments in existing laws including Right to Education providing compulsory education to children till 14 years of age, National Adult Education Programme. Government has also recognized the efforts put in by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in India in the task of spreading knowledge especially among marginalized, deprived or neglected groups of the society. In accordance with the National Policy on Education, 1986, a Programme of Action (PoA) was envisaged to develop a sincere relationship between the Government and NGOs towards the objective of achieving full literacy and spread of knowledge. It was indeed a much needed step to widen the horizon of support for NGOs working towards promotion of literacy. In this regard, the idea of Adult Education deserves complete attention because adults also claim to acquire education which can help them to learn new skills and expand their domain of knowledge. To promote adult education extensively in India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (Government of India) has extended its aid in the form of two schemes: Assistance to Voluntary Agencies in the field of Adult Education and Jan Shikshan Sansthan. Focusing on Jan Shikshan Sansthan, these provide vocational education skill development training to those adults having no or rudimentary level of education. (MHRD, Government of India). The Government has now decided to merge these two schemes and name as one, but still the very objective of the authority remains same, that is, to continue to assist Voluntary agencies/NGOs in their functioning towards promoting adult education.

ADULT EDUCATION:

It is one of the very crucial components of education. It deals with the education of adults, particularly in the age group of 15-35 years. Since these people are already a part of working population in some or the other form thus their need is to enhance their knowledge and skills to improve their livelihood. Education would add onto their already existing set of knowledge which could help them to improve their economic status and general well being. The intrinsic idea of imparting education to such people is to make them realize the reason for their deprivation and poor standard of living and thus making them aware of the consequences of such form of life so that they can put in the required efforts of learning new skills and knowledge and hence can improve the quality of their lives. The methodology of imparting such specific kind of education to adhere to the needs of the adults is quite different from the conventional mode because for adults, there is a need for systematic and sustained self-educating activities which is in response to their requirements. The specific advantage that adults do have is the accumulated knowledge and work experience which can add to their learning experience and most importantly, these learners are self-motivated and self-directed so their participation in education system is voluntary. In India, the focus has always been on promoting education among adults along with the traditional form of education for young learners. In this regard, a series of programs have been introduced since the First Five Year Plan and in this series, the most prominent step was the launch of National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988

which aimed at imparting functional literacy to non-literates adults. Government has also been working towards establishing gender parity in terms of availability of educational opportunities to both adult males and females, with special attention to women of derived and marginalized communities and also belonging to SCs, STs etc.

JAN SHIKSHAN SANSTHANS (JSSs):

Jan Shikshan Sansthan, popularly called as JSSs, are government established institutions aimed at imparting education to illiterates, neo-literates or semi-literates, basically, un-reached or isolated population. The target population for these centers is mainly the people belonging to the age group of 15-35 years, that is, adults. Originally launched in 1967 as Shramik Vidyapeeth which was actually a multi-faceted adult education institution with core purpose of improving the quality of life of industrial workers by enhancing their vocational skills and also to help the migrated group of people, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) got its name in 2000 and along with this, the domain of this scheme was extended to include all the un-advantaged people of the rural areas. The focus of such centers is on merely employed people or even such employed who wants to increase their quality of livelihood. These educational organizations have the main intention of imparting literacy-linked vocational education along with providing technical and practical knowledge for the skill development of the beneficiaries. In this process of spreading education, the idea is to shape the target group into self-reliant and independent section of the society. Thus these centers are mainly located in remote areas or isolated regions of the country. The best part about these establishments is the cost effective provisions of acquiring education and no prerequisite in the form of educational qualifications. There is no condition on age limit as well which can help anyone of any age to be a part of learning process (National Literacy Mission). The main emphasis of JSSs is on providing such kinds of skills "that have a market in the region of their establishment". It not only involves the task of developing appropriate curriculum for vocational training and academic knowledge but also takes up the initiative of building up network with entrepreneurs and industries for suitable placements of the trainees. So JSSs are very essential part of the education system of this country which primarily gives priority to adult education with complete attention towards increasing employment opportunities for people.

NEED FOR JSSs:

The idea of establishing Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) acknowledge the fact that getting education or adding to the existing set of knowledge is much needed for those who are already a part of working population because it is required to upgrade oneself constantly to meet the changing demands of the market and also for enhancing one's horizon of acquired information to be at the same pace as the society is as far as the development process is concerned. Hence, the concept of adult education seems to be a relevant issue not only for the concerned policy makers but also for the responsible parties of the society. For these adults, who cannot be a part of the conventional system of education, there arises a sincere need to set up a parallel base of providing required knowledge and skills thus JSSs came out as a perfect solution in this regard. Started with the principal motive of imparting education to adults aged 15-35 years, JSSs focus on such deprived or neglected section of the society who could not gain knowledge and skills as young learners thus suffering financial problems even being employed and also such people who dropped out of the learning system hence remained under employed, so unable to meet their basic requirements. Such centers are

much in need as per the situation in the current employment market because these provide appropriate and required skill-up gradation in most cases while imparting new set of vocational knowledge to many others which, in turn, helps the target group to raise their efficiency and productivity level to upgrade their market value, therefore, providing a sustainable growth trajectory for these new learners and this is plausible with the help of JSSs.

FUNCTIONING OF JSSs:

It has been noted that we should know the way JSSs work and fulfill their objective of satisfying the educational needs of adults aged 15-35 years. Working under the domain of National Literacy Mission Authority, Jan Shikshan Sansthan functions as any conventional educational center. Established in 27 States/ Union Territories, JSSs are 254 in number which is quite a considerable number. Divided into three categories i.e., category A, category B and category C depending upon their location and performance. In category A, JSSs of the following states are included: Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai (Worli). In category B, states/UT are: Ajmer, Aurangabad(M.S), Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Cuttack, Faridabad, Guntur, Indore, Jammu, Jamshedpur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kanpur, Kota, Lucknow, Madurai, Mysore, Nagpur, Narendrapur, Pune, Ranga Reddy, Rourkela, Surat, Tiruchirappalli, Thiruvananthapuram, Vadodara, Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam. While remaining JSSs are in category C (National Literacy Mission Authority website). There are five main divisions of types of courses offered in all JSSs which are: DAE, MES, NIFT, NIOS and other. These courses are basically named according to the sources which led to such types of courses like Department of Adult Education; National Institute of Fashion Technology, National Institute of Open Schooling MES is Modular Employable Skill. All the different courses are open to all kinds of social divisions on the basis of gender, namely, male, female and transgender, with the aim to target every gender without any discrimination giving equal opportunity of being a part of any course(s) to all. There is also a consideration of qualification of the potential beneficiaries that has been kept in mind while structuring the format of JSSs as all learners have been divided into four main divisions on the basis of their educational qualifications which are: whether they are illiterate, neo-literate and have acquired rudimentary level of education or any other qualification that they have. There is also a provision of considering adult learners according to their income level that is whether they belong to APL (Above Poverty Line) or BPL (Below Poverty Line). Apart from imparting education to adults aged 15-35 years, there is also a consideration for adults of more than 35 years of age. To ensure transparency in the functioning of JSS, there is a continuous evaluation process that takes place on a regular basis for all JSSs working in this country. In addition to it, an accreditation process has evolved in partnership with states and only accredited NGOs with good track record would implement JSS. The management of dysfunctional JSS would be changed. The quality of JSS training programme would get improved with the help of professional technical institutions of the districts and the programs generally get tuned to meet local demand. Placement record of the trainees in the self employment would be maintained.

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF JSSs:

It is very important to consider the essential benefits of the existence of JSSs so that the efficiency of funds allotted to JSSs by the government can be analyzed. While examining the positive aspects of these centers, one can hope for establishment of more such centers in the country and also necessary efforts can be taken for improving the efficiency of these centers by the government and allotted authorities if needed. It is quite essential to appreciate the impact of these institutions and their long term beneficial effects can be analyzed and thus can form a basis for further policy actions.

The interesting feature of JSSs is the target group towards which these institutions work. These focus on improving the livelihood conditions for neo-literates, semi-literates and illiterates who reside in isolated and neglected areas and are disadvantaged sections of the society because they could not a part of the already laid educational system and thus couldn't take the advantage of the learning. Such people need to be upgraded in their quality of working which further increases their efficiency and productivity ability. Their working skills can be raised only by educating them. The kind of knowledge that suits them is somewhat different from the desires of other sections of the society because they expect to raise their standard of living by improving their options of livelihood. These establishments are very important for the balanced functioning of the economy because as we know that education is a tool required by all universally for learning new ideas and skills and it has to be imparted to all irrespective of gender, caste, creed and race. So in any society, if the conventional and traditional form of education system meets the needs of young desired learners then there should be provision for adults who could not educate them in a required form at the right time but are very curious to upgrade themselves in terms of knowledge. Since such working adults cannot be a part of schools, colleges and other higher institutions so there should be special educational institutions provisioned for adults adhering to their needs. These centers work in accordance with the idea that such adults are experienced and have practical knowledge and had already acquired certain skills in the due course of their jobs so the main priority of these agencies is to provide market oriented skills and knowledge to the adult learners means such skills which are needed in the market for availing better jobs and also such technical teaching which can help them to be more efficient and technically advanced in their respective fields. These learners are always in a need to better

themselves in all aspects so that they can create more lucrative livelihood options not only for themselves but also for their coming generation. With such continuous teaching and learning, these adults can, not only, keep them at the same pace as that of technical advancements happening around them but can also be additions to the upcoming improvements with the help of their own contributions. The section of the society needs special care and attention in terms of educational facilities provided to them so that they can keep themselves updated and raises the quality of their living and can also contribute to the development of the economy in all possible forms.

The second vibrant characteristic of such agencies is the cost effectiveness of the programs provided in their premises. All the courses offered and provided by such establishments are available at a very nominal fee for all the aspired interested candidates and relaxation in course fee is also admissible to people from the category SC/ST, Handicapped, Neo-Literates, and Illiterates. The idea is to impart quality education and appropriate practical instructions to the registered learners at the minimal cost that is possible which is not only affordable to them but also worthy enough for the kind of economical benefits provided by such courses. The aspect of relaxation accessible to specific categories of learners is also a viable feature of JSSs so that knowledge and training can be widespread and should satisfy the crucial aspect of any educational program i.e., accessibility.

Along with the main courses available for all kinds of learners, training and up gradation programs are also provided to key resource persons, master trainers, and trainees in voluntary course timely and according to the changing needs of the updated programs and also for neo-literates. There is also a provision of assigning knowledgeable people to help these new learners and also to help in the process of constant revision of the programs and courses. Their societal, economical, technical and environmental know-how is used for making the continuous changes in the course curriculum which can help in keeping at the pace of national and international changes taking place.

The other secondary features of JSSs involve the designing of equivalency programs through open learning systems. Such programs are structured to meet the needs of those learners who could not be a part of all the desired courses physically probably because of lack of physical convenience or lack of available transportation facility in some cases. These institutions also provide Library and mobile library facilities to the participants for their self enhancement and also for availability of diverse and wide range of learning materials under one roof. These agencies work progressively towards the main objective of developing the knowledge set of adults and making them established in their respective work fields or opening up new ventures for jobs for them whether in the form of employment under some employer or even self employment opportunities for many aspiring entrepreneurs. The another interesting aspect of such courses is that mostly all types of courses are basically tailor made, and built around the specific needs of groups of participants taking into account their educational level, aptitude and receptivity and while building up the course structure, the entire emphasis is given on practical work with theoretical instruction to support the technical and skill base. The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India provides necessary technical guidance and support services and reviews the programs from time-to-time. The JSS courses are distinguished from other formal education and technical courses by the fact that these are designed mainly considering the need of the clientele or organizations and are flexible in nature. The programs would be based on the polyvalent or multi-dimensional approach to adult education and this polyvalent approach attempts to provide knowledge and skills in an integrated manner. To raise the effectiveness and efficiency of these agencies, a follow-up is maintained to assess the benefits accrued to the trainees by collecting information about their employment or income generating status, either through self-employment or wage employment. This post learning stage is essential as it helps the fund givers and the state responsible for the funding to know about the utilization of those funds. Actually, programme monitoring, evaluation and certification are inbuilt in these courses. Thus, in short, JSSs are fruitful organizations working the social objective of achieving maximum literacy among adults who are neo-literates, semi-literates or even illiterates.

CONCLUSION:

Education has been into the limelight since many decades. With the complete focus on the main objective of empowering people through education, government has introduced many programs in this regard and the efforts put in by the state and associated authorities are commendable. After the launch of National Literacy Mission in 1988, the entire nation has been covered by literacy campaigns. Here, the mentioning of adult education is noteworthy as many literacy enhancing initiatives have taken place in this field also. Education for adults requires special attention and care as their needs are totally different from the conventional group of learners who are generally young and new to many ideas without much experience. Thus, government has been constantly putting efforts towards adult education. In this regard, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) play a vital role and have been significant in their impact factor. These are basically the institutions which work towards adult education with complete focus on neo-literates, semi-literates and even illiterates in the form of providing them academic knowledge, vocational skills and also practical information along with constant training. Undoubtedly, JSS turned out to be very efficient educational

program started with the initiative of Indian government and also proved itself with very productive results coming out in the form of huge number of enrolled candidates in almost all types of courses, consistently increasing number of beneficiaries, rising employment, skill enhancement which further increases the ability of people thus improves the quality of human resource of this country.

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